

# SPRING 2017 PRRC COURSE CATALOG



## ANGER MANAGEMENT

Learn ways to avoid letting anger take control of your interactions. Avoid becoming angry in the first place and learn to recognize warning signs early and take measures to defuse tense encounters. The hope is that the veterans will decrease their overall arousal, feel they have more control over the challenging events in their lives, and be less likely to act in ways that either take them further from their goals or lead them to feel worse about themselves.



## ART GUILD

Veterans work on their self-determined art projects in this art productivity class: 1) To take action steps toward full citizenship and community integration through the creative arts; 2) To visualize and actualize recovery goals through individual veterans' chosen means of artistic expression; 3) To improve physical stamina, manual dexterity and task-focused cognitive/affective processing; 4) To improve social skills by discussing and planning community integration around shared interests of class members; 5) To reduce stigma and isolation that may lead to relapse. Creative Arts Therapy staff and volunteers support mindfulness and problem-solving skills while encouraging Veterans in creating their art for exhibits in the community and the VA.



## ART THERAPY

Art therapy has a long history of helping people get better through the action of art-making. Art is a powerful tool to identify and process unresolved emotions that there may be no words for in talk therapy, but that get in the way of recovery. Class exercises help students refocus attention away from fears, pain and rumination into healthier engagement in expressive painting, line drawing, pastels, storyboards and collage. Students bring non-verbal thought and feeling patterns to awareness, improving their emotional expression, creating visual “maps” to their recovery goals.



## BLUEPRINT FOR RECOVERY (WRAP)

This class is designed to guide you through the development of a Wellness Recovery Action Plan, or WRAP. This is a plan to help you in your mental health recovery, help you get well, stay well, and help you to create the life you want. This plan can also be useful when you are confronted with other stressful situations as well. You may not complete the entire plan in these sessions and that is OK. You will be encouraged to work on them at home or with other staff whom you feel comfortable with.



## CATCH IT, CHECK IT, CHANGE IT!

In Catch it, Check it, Change it! class we will learn about Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, developed by Dr. Aaron Beck, and how to identify the tools used to

manage and cope with symptoms of anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other conditions. CBT has been shown to be effective in overcoming a variety of mental health obstacles. Throughout this class we will learn about ways to support long-term change by examining the relationships between how we think, feel, and behave in different situations, circumstances, and environments so that we can enjoy a more fulfilling life.



### CLEARING THE CLUTTER

“Clearing the Clutter” is an evidence-based group offered through GPOS and PRRC that provides cognitive-behavioral skills, strategies, and tools to address Hoarding Disorder as well as hoarding and cluttering behaviors. The 20-week protocol uses a session-by-session approach to address symptoms in a closed group context with manualized materials. Veterans will be expected to commit to the full course of treatment with two-hour weekly group. The evidence suggests that maximum benefit occurs with the inclusion of home visits, so participants should feel comfortable with group facilitators conducting at least one home visit for assessment purposes and to individualize treatment objectives. **The group capacity will be 8 members and all prospective participants must be screened for eligibility.** Providers who would like to refer patients and Veterans who wish to self-refer can contact Miriam Beyer, LCSW at extension 25166.



### COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHY INSPIRATION

This series of 2-hour photography and videography individual training sessions takes place out in the SF community: Experience and photograph interesting SF people, places and things. Grow your creative self-expression. Gather images of your unique recovery story. Experience better mental focus and flow/zone processes. SFVA creative arts therapy staff will provide individual support for portable skills, offering a variety of engaging practices for seeing and being in the present. Occasional visits to local museums and galleries (free access) will help inspire and enlighten. Sessions begin from the lobby of the Veterans’ Building at 401 Van Ness, Fridays from 10am-12noon.

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.” – Proust



### COPING THROUGH THE SENSES

Participants in Coping Through the Senses class will learn and practice strategies and skills for managing difficult emotions and stress through the use of sensory input (smell, taste, sight, hearing, touch, movement). Participants will choose the strategies that work best for them and develop a personalized plan for coping with stress and difficult emotions.



### DUAL RECOVERY

This class is a place to learn about and discuss issues related to substance use and mental health. The atmosphere is welcoming and non-confrontational, and embraces both the abstinence model as well as the harm reduction approach. We

will learn about addiction, how addiction interplays with mental health, and create individualized and comprehensive relapse prevention plans. There will also be videos shown, followed by discussion. Veterans facing any addictions are welcome, including Veterans struggling with tobacco addiction, gambling, sex or food addictions and problems with 'habit-forming' prescription medication.



### ENDING SELF STIGMA

The goal of this class is to help individuals who are living with serious mental illness overcome internalized stigma, and move towards goals that important to them. The class is based on cognitive-behavioral therapy and recovery approaches, with an emphasis on the cultivation of the self “outside mental illness.” Key topics include: stigma and stereotypes, internalization and automatic thoughts, strengthening the self, dealing with discriminatory behavior, and increasing connection with others.



### FOOD & FITNESS

This program will provide you with information, skills and motivation so that you can be successful in creating a healthier life. You will learn the effects of being overweight on both physical and mental health. Some you are probably already aware of, but others you may not know. This is a chance to not only learn why and how to get healthy, but to actually DO IT! People with mental illness who have taken this class lose an average of 8 pounds. So come join us in developing healthful habits while having fun.



### GROUP VOLUNTEERING

Are you interested in giving back? Do you want to create a meaningful role for yourself in the community, learn some new skills, meet some new people, or explore a range of different volunteer opportunities before committing to one? Or maybe you're looking for a way to sharpen up your work skills, beef up your resume, and/or develop some possible work contacts? Do you want to do all of this in a fun, low pressure, group setting with a group of fellow Veterans? If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, you'll want to check out Group Volunteering, aka The Service Club!

Participants will meet weekly to:

1. Identify an area of interest for volunteering.
2. Find volunteer opportunities to match those interests.
3. Contact organizations to arrange group volunteer days.
4. Volunteer with the group!



### HAPPINESS BOOT CAMP

Happiness can be conditioned. While some people seem to be born eternal optimists, the rest of us have to work at it. Just as a recruit is molded into a Marine, Soldier, Airman, or Sailor during boot camp through physical and mental training, Veterans in the Happiness Boot Camp will learn about and practice the evidence-based exercises that have been shown to increase happiness and sustain

it. Like any boot camp, Happiness Boot Camp requires focus and may feel like hard work, at least in the beginning. For those who are up to the challenge, the end result will be the development of a personalized emotional fitness routine that can be used to provide lasting happiness.



### HEALTH WORKSHOP

Do you want to feel better, do the things you want to do, and be in control of your health? Then this workshop is for you. A series of classes that teaches you to self-manage your daily life activities in order to maintain and/or increase an active fulfilling healthy lifestyle.

Topics in the workshop include:

- \* Heart health
- \* Diabetes
- \* Obesity
- \* Cancer- colorectal, lung, prostate, skin
- \* Nutrition and Physical activity
- \* Prevention and treatment of common infectious diseases, HIV and STDs
- \* Doctor Visits- regular check-ups, screening tests, shots (vaccines), talking with your doctor.



### INNER RESOURCES: MEDITATION

This class is an educational program using mindfulness, breathing, and meditation to enhance your ability to cope with stress. In the class you will learn to deal with stress as it is happening by practicing meditations during the class and on your own in between class meetings. You will receive weekly handouts and audio- recordings of guided practice sessions for home use. The handouts include information, frequently asked questions, and journal exercises to help you build your own personal practice of meditation for stress.



### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

This class will provide general knowledge about mental health and recovery, including practical facts about mental illness and effective treatments, how to build social supports, how to use medications effectively, how to cope with stress, problems and symptoms, and how to navigate the mental health system to get your needs met and work toward recovery. Each class will build on the previous one, giving you the opportunity to enhance your knowledge each week and to feel empowered in pursuing your goals.



### MEANING IN MANHOOD

What does it mean to be a man in 2017? What do people actually mean when they say “act like a man” or “man up”? How do our friends, our significant others, our family, our culture, and our society expect us, as men, to think, feel, and behave and how do those expectations affect us? What are gender roles and how do they impact us on a personal level? How can we be most effective in our roles as sons, fathers, brothers, partners, friends, workers , etc.? In Meaning and Manhood class, we will explore all of these questions in detail. Participants will be supported to:

1. *Identify and discuss personal, interpersonal, cultural, and societal expectations of what it means to be a man/to be masculine.*
2. *Recognize and discuss the impact of fulfilling or failing to fulfill expectations of manhood/masculinity on men's physical, emotional, and behavioral health.*
3. *Demonstrate the ability to identify and resist or challenge unhelpful models of manhood/masculinity.*
4. *Develop an individualized model of manhood/masculinity that is positive and personally meaningful.*
5. *Practice skills and strategies to be more effective in desired social roles.*



### MY RECOVERY STORY

My Recovery Story was created for individuals who have taken the Ending Self Stigma class. The goal of this class is to support Veterans in taking the next step in overcoming internalized stigma. This class is largely student-driven so that the class topics are presented by students and facilitators and are of personal interest to students. Key topics include: stigma and stereotypes in society, disclosing to others/telling your story, and advocacy targeting stigma around mental illness.



### PEER SUPPORT

The group is led by two VA Peer Specialists, who are themselves in recovery. A different recovery focused dialogue will be discussed weekly, and a mutual aid model of group work is utilized by the facilitators. This group is open to anyone who would like to participate. The group focuses on building upon ones' strengths with a specific emphasis on further developing coping skills for everyday life.



### PROBLEM-SOLVING TRAINING

Participants will learn problem-solving skills that are known to be helpful in resolving and/or coping with stressful problems. Participants will learn about and practice:

- Making good decisions.
- Dealing with problems creatively.
- Recognizing and dealing with barriers to reaching one's goals.
- Better understanding and managing negative emotions.
- Being more accepting of problems that are unsolvable.
- Being more planful in the way you attempt to resolve problems.



### READING FOR RECOVERY

This bibliotherapy class involves selected readings from the first-person recovery-oriented literature. Attendees will be asked to read and discuss selections from books and articles describing an individual's recovery stories. Some of the selections will be from the following: "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden," "The Center Cannot Hold," "An Unquiet Mind," "Free to Fly," and "Get Me Out of Here ." Reading and discussing recovery oriented stories can often inspire hope and serve to point out that recovery is real and possible. Veterans will also have the opportunity to create their own recovery story using a variety of media.



### RECOVERY IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD

This class will address common issues among young adult Veterans (21-40 years old), such as readjusting to civilian life, going to school, getting a job, managing family/relationships, and pursuing life goals. It will introduce coping strategies for managing obstacles to goals, including psychosis and other mental health problems (like depression, PTSD, and substance use). This class will help you learn tools to understand and overcome these challenges, while you move forward with your life and pursue your recovery goals. This group will be open to all young adult Veterans (including those not enrolled in the PRRC program). We will sometimes meet at various destinations in the community, as agreed upon by class members, to encourage social connection and community integration. Please join us!



### SEEKING SANCTUARY

This class focuses on (non-denominational) spiritual issues. Class is led by the VA chaplaincy.



### SKILLFUL EMOTIONS: PART I/II

Do you frequently experience overwhelming emotion? Do you go from great happiness to intense sadness to overwhelming anger without seeing clearly why? Do these unpredictable emotional changes affect your relationships? This class will cover these concepts and introduce coping skills and approaches to better manage our emotional life and relationships, using Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). Group members will bring in examples related to their self-identified goals and problem behaviors, actively working to apply mindfulness, emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and distress tolerance skills more effectively in their own lives. Active participation in and outside of class will be essential to help group members feel more skillful, confident, and effective in managing emotions and cultivating healthy relationships.

**\*Both Parts I and Part II of this class will be required, to provide an opportunity to effectively apply the skills to specific situations in your own life.\***



### SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

This class is based on a well-researched model of social skills training. The class provides an easy and fun way to learn about and practice expressive, receptive, and conversational skills involved in human relationships. The group focuses on training skills in the following areas: Conversation, Assertiveness, Conflict Management, Communal Living, Friendship and Dating, Health Maintenance, Work, and Coping Skills for Drug and Alcohol Use.





### SPEAKING OF SMOKING

Speaking of Smoking is a class designed to assist Veterans with tobacco cessation and reduction. The only requirement for class registration is a desire to make positive changes around your tobacco use. We use a VA-issued workbook which is quite useful and informative. Although we will progress through the workbook together as a class, the class is also designed to include hand-tailored interventions to match where each participant is at with their own process. There is no pressure to quit on any given date, only lots of support to help you reach *your own goals*. Since inception of the class, many Veterans have quit smoking, so please come join us and see what we can do together as a team!



### STORY CORPS

Writers of all levels are welcome to attend the Veterans Story Corps. In this class, veterans work individually on a variety of recovery-oriented writing exercises to increase self-awareness and reduce tension while also increasing language arts and communication skills. Veterans are offered an opportunity to explore prompts including journaling, expressive writing, poetry, non-fiction, playwriting, and short stories about real topics relevant to their current challenges or personal goals. Group members are invited to practice their storytelling skills and share their writing with peers to gain support and further reflection. Anyone—from beginner to expert—is welcome to come and try their hand at Story Corps!



### TRAUMA RECOVERY

The Trauma Recovery Group is based on an evidence-based approach to helping individuals who have experienced trauma, highly stressful events, and symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as challenges related to other types of serious mental illness. This Cognitive-behavioral Therapy (CBT) program includes learning about *breathing retraining*, *common reactions to trauma*, and developing *skills for managing upsetting thoughts and feelings*. These techniques can help reduce PTSD and other posttraumatic symptoms such as anxiety, distress, irritability and high levels of body tension.



### VETERANS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The PRRC's Student Council exists to allow Veterans the opportunity to become "active participants" in the development and day-to-day operations of the program. This is an excellent opportunity to interact with other PRRC students and staff, aid in the development of new initiatives, and advocate for Veteran-centered care.



### WOMEN CREATE

Female veterans will be invited to discuss, share, visualize and actualize recovery goals through discussion of recovery concepts and through active creative

expression. Class will encourage women to share aspirations and unique methods of creativity such as visual art, writing, and performing. Class will encourage mindfulness and support healthy social involvement through the discussion of shared interests of female veterans.



#### WRAP & ROLL

“Do you like good music...”, song lyrics and cover art to back-up your recovery? This class is a sound track plan to help you find your way through good times and bad. Along with solid tunes that get your heart thumping and feet tapping, there’s plenty of support and calmer notes for developing your own Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP). WRAP & Roll is all about focusing your ears, heart and mind on the life you want, to get well and stay well, even when dealing with stress. “Oh yeah, Oh yeah!”